



Photography Guide



**Tips for taking
the best shots
with your
camera or
smartphone**

**Submit your
photos the right
way so they are
the first pick**

take
great
PHOTOS

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PHOTO SUBMISSION

media@IHSAinc.com

Photos should protect the IHSA brand image.
High standards in presentation and safety are required for IHSA photos.

- Professionally attired rider (neat hair, no tank tops, clean boots, etc.)
- Well-presented horse (i.e. no cross rails, dirty/broken fences, fences with no ground rails, horses with hanging knees, dirty horses, ill-fitting tack)
- Legally obtained photos (no watermarks unless photos are provided by the photographer)
- Helmets always on hunter seat riders and helmets or hats for Western riders (if possible, this can be a challenge). Remember that headwear shades the eyes and try to keep your subjects lit.

Photo Submission Checklist

- Photo is high resolution
- From your smartphone, email photos at actual size
- If you email from a laptop, attach the file or share to a Dropbox folder
- Photo is oriented horizontally or landscape
- Photo is in focus
- For spotlight riders and horses, subject should be looking at the camera.
- Spotlight rider shots should be headshots with helmet or cowboy hat, riding shots are not acceptable
- Include the names of the subjects, check the spelling
- Include the photo credit spelled correctly
- Better yet, name the photo file with the subjects and the photographer credit. If you name the file properly, no one will ever need to search for the information
- Submit with your contact information, including phone and email
- Submit photos to media@IHSAinc.com

TOP 6 PHOTO TIPS - CAMERA & PHONE

1. Shoot in short bursts rather than one long burst.

Turn your camera or smartphone to continuous drive mode which will allow you to continuously capture.

2. Shoot with two eyes open. Closing one eye lessens your ability to determine depth and hinders your eye's ability to track movement.

3. For shooting action, go for shutter priority.

Capturing motion is all about deciding whether to freeze the action, or whether to try and portray the action through using a long shutter speed. In most cases, you'll want to get a sharp crisp image of the scene before you. To do this, select a quick shutter speed. How fast this shutter speed is will depend on how fast your subject is moving. 1/4000 of a second can be fast enough for race cars. 1/250 is fast enough for a jogger. 1/2500 or 1/1600 is normally fast enough for the show ring.

4. Anticipation is the key. The first thing to learn is that you need to be ready. It's vital to have your camera or smartphone set up to shoot so that all you have to worry about is composing and capturing the shot you want. Knowing what you want to achieve can be helpful, but getting great action shots is more about reacting quickly and decisively to what is going on around you.

5. Prepare with the pre-focus. In many cases, you'll know where the action is about to happen, for example, over a specific fence. In order to do all you can do to prepare yourself for the shot, focus your lens on that area before the horse appears. Then all you have to do is wait until the scene unfolds through your viewfinder and get snapping.

6. Shoot in raw mode. It takes up more space on your data card but it can save you during the editing process by giving you the ability to white balance and make other adjustments.

Horse-Centric Photo Tips

Make Sure You Have Appropriate Lighting Outdoors Some of the best photos can be taken in early morning after sunrise or in the golden hour when the sun is setting just above the horizon. If you're shooting during the middle of the day, move to a position where the sun is behind you and directed at the horse. It's a good idea to take some practice shots so you can test the lighting. Different color horses show up better in photographs. For instance, cameras often have trouble focusing on dark colored horses resulting in dark feature-less horses or an over-exposed background. If you are going to be shooting in an indoor arena, stand in a corner of the arena if possible so you can get the best photos when natural light can illuminate the rider. It is better to underexpose than overexpose. If photos are a bit dark, they can be edited and lightened. Photos that are too light or overexposed cannot easily be edited.

Be Sure to Time Your Photo Correctly to Capture Quick Moments Timing your shot perfectly to capture a horse mid-air over a jump can be very tricky, but gets easier with practice. For beginners, we recommend that you set your camera to sports mode and allow for continuous shooting. The goal is to capture the horse at the peak of the movement (ie. when jumping you want the horse to have square knees and be centered over the jump.) Helpful hint: Horses jump nicer over oxers than verticals. For photos of horses on the flat, follow the knees of the horse, snapping the shots at the top of the movement.

Don't Frighten the Horses It's important that you don't distract the horse and rider while they are competing. Don't get too close to the rail and quietly step back when the horse is coming close by. Always walk, never run. If you choose to shoot from a crouched position remember to slowly stand well in advance of the horse reaching you. Mute your phone, and NEVER use the flash.

For Awards Photos Bring Candy or Tic Tacs It is important that the horse stand square and keep his or her ears forward, looking attentive. Ask the people in the shot to look at the camera. Be meticulous--how does the ribbon look? If wearing a cooler, is it straight and are the buckles fastened? Shake the tic tacs or crinkle the candy wrapper to encourage horses to put their ears forward.

FRAMING

When taking a photo, keep in mind the composition. For media use, we only accept horizontal or landscape images, as vertical photos do not create enough space for cropping and are not easily formatted for web or eblasts. See the images on this page for a reference.

By framing the subject with another object in the scene, you can create striking compositions that really draw the viewer into your image.

Search The Scene For Framing Objects

A framing object refers to anything in the scene that can be used to form a visual frame around the subject or focal point.

Frames will add wonderful visual interest to an image, as well as context and depth. See below the Great Lakes Equestrian Festival Sign that tells where the photo is, as well as frames the horse, rider and jump. The frame is perfect for drawing the viewer's eye into the scene toward the focal point.

The simple act of taking a few steps back, or changing your shooting position and viewpoint, can result in a more interestingly framed image.

Follow The Rule of Thirds

The rule of thirds is all about where you position the main elements in a scene. The rule (which is really just a guideline) suggests that an image will look more balanced and aesthetically pleasing if you position important parts of the scene off-center.

Switch the gridlines on in your smartphone's camera app to display two horizontal and two vertical lines. The rule of thirds suggests that the most powerful areas of the image are the four points where the lines intersect, and that our eyes are naturally drawn to these areas first. Position your main subject on one of these intersections to give the most emphasis to your subject.



BACKGROUND

When taking photos for submission, be aware of your surroundings. In a stadium setting, choose a position or angle to shoot where the background seats are full. Empty seats in the background are not ideal and can rarely be used.

Be aware of any outside distractions, such as rogue trees, port-a-potties and tents. Keep your mind focused on the image as a whole. Power lines, signs, garbage and sometimes even trees can be serious distractions from the overall focus of the image.

These all take away from the image and distract the viewer. When doing a portrait, try to capture several images — one with a serious pose, one with a smile, both wide and closed-mouthed. (Fun Tip! Greenery makes everyone's skin look better, as it complements in the natural hues in the skin tone.)



LIGHTING

Direct sunlight is harsh, makes your subject squint and creates hard directional shadows and unpredictable white balance conditions. When shooting in the shade, there are no more harsh shadows, only smooth milky shadows created by your subject's natural features. With proper exposure and white balance, you can make these shots look amazing. The best way to have the proper exposure is to tap your phone screen so that it can adjust. Use your focal point to balance the color.



FOCUS

Lack of correct focus in an image is probably the number one reason why a potentially good phone photo can fail. Other problems such as exposure and color can often be fixed in post-processing, but when something is too out of focus there's nothing you can do—you can't make a blurry photo sharp. Follow the tips below to always have a sharp phone photo.

A photo that is completely out of focus, where all parts of the image are blurred, obviously won't look good (unless done deliberately for creative effect). If the entire image is blurred you won't be able to make out any detail in the scene. Making sure that at least part of your photo is in sharp focus is very important.

Focus helps to draw attention to the most important part of the scene, which is normally the main subject. If your main subject is out of focus, attention will be diverted to the other parts of the scene that are in focus, which isn't usually what you want.

Tips & Tricks

Always Tap To Focus

As clever as the camera on your smartphone is, it can't always recognize the most important part of the scene. The camera's autofocus is pretty good at picking out faces, but without a face to focus on it will always focus on the center of the scene.

Adjust Exposure After Focusing

Your smartphone will automatically set the exposure based on where you tap to focus. If you tap to focus on a bright area of the scene, the camera will ensure that area of the scene is correctly exposed. Likewise, if you tap to focus on a dark area of the scene, exposure will be set for that part of the image. After tapping on the screen to set your focus point, simply slide your finger up or down the screen to adjust the exposure to suit. As you slide your finger, you'll see the yellow sun icon moving up or down the exposure slider next to the focus box. As you adjust the exposure try to ensure that no part of the scene goes completely white or completely black, otherwise the camera might not capture any detail at all in these regions.



Tap & Hold To Lock Focus

Even when you tap to set focus, if anything changes in the scene the camera may automatically adjust focus and exposure. For example, if you've set focus on your subject, then someone walks through your scene, the camera might readjust the focus and exposure onto that person. To ensure this doesn't happen, you can lock the focus on your subject, effectively disabling the autofocus feature. So even if the rest of the scene changes, your subject will still be in focus. To ensure focus remains locked, tap and hold for a couple of seconds on the subject you want in focus. When focus is locked you'll see AE/AF LOCK in a yellow box at the top of the screen. AE means Auto Exposure and AF is Auto Focus.

Even though exposure is locked when you tap and hold, you can still swipe up or down on the screen to adjust the exposure without changing the focus point. Once you've locked focus, it will remain on that area of the scene no matter what happens.

Don't Change Distance After Focusing

After setting your focus on a particular part of the scene, make sure you don't change the distance between the phone and the subject. This is very important as focusing works by setting the focus point at a particular distance from the camera.

When you tap to set focus you're telling the camera to focus on any objects at or near that particular distance from the camera's lens. We call this the focal plane. Any objects that are in front of or behind this focal plane may appear out of focus.

Therefore, if you tap to set focus and then you change the distance between your camera and the subject, that subject may no longer be sharply focused because it's not situated at the focal point that you set.

Avoid Very Close Subjects

The design of the phone camera means that it can't focus on very close subjects. On the iPhone 5s, 6 and 6 Plus, the camera can't focus closer than about three inches. With this in mind, be careful not to get too close to your subject; otherwise you'll only get blurry shots!

Remember, whenever you change the distance between your phone and the subject, always tap again to set the focus point.



Sometimes it might be frustrating when photographing close up shots like flowers because you can't get close enough to avoid getting some of the distracting background in the shot.

It's better to get the subject in focus and then crop away the edges of the photo, than to get too close and end up with the whole image blurred.

Achieve a Shallow Depth Of Field (Or use Portrait Mode)

Depth of field refers to how much of the scene is in focus, from front to back. A photo with a large depth of field will have all or most of the scene in focus, from near to distant objects.

Shallow depth of field, such as in the image below, is when only a small portion of the image is in focus, and anything behind or in front of that part of the image appears blurred.

A shallow depth of field is a great way of blurring out the unimportant parts of the scene, such as distracting backgrounds, while keeping the main subject sharply focused. This puts the emphasis on the main subject, making it more important in your composition.

Avoid Camera Shake

In low light, your phone has to use a slower shutter speed in order to capture enough light to create your photo. Unfortunately this gives you more time to introduce "camera shake" which will most likely result in a completely blurred image. To reduce the chances of this happening, try to keep the camera as still as possible. The ultimate solution is to use a monopod or a tripod to keep your camera perfectly steady while shooting.

The next best option is to hold the phone against something solid, such as a wall, a lamppost, a door frame, a tree trunk, a table top, a car roof, a fence or even the floor. Make use of whatever is available to keep you phone steady.



PRESENTATION SHOTS

When taking a presentation/award photograph, make sure that the area for the presentation is well lit. The rider's face should be visible and easy to see, as well as the presenters in the photograph. The photo on the left represents a poorly lit presentation, and the rider's face is shadowed. Even if you are unable to change the lighting, you should address shadowed faces by asking the subject to lift their hat or to reposition. Also, make sure that all awards are tilted in a way that they are not reflecting the light. The photograph on the right is what each photographer should strive to capture when photographing the award presentation.



Shooting with a smartphone

Don't try for the jumping or sliding shots, instead get a great head and shoulder shot of the rider next to the horse or a great shot of the horses' face. Candid shots are a great way to capture the moment.





This is only the tip of the iceberg. Just like riding and training horses, there is always room to learn and grow. Talk with photographers. Ask questions. The joy of the journey is to keep learning.

Thanks for the photos

Al Cook Photo

Aldi Ansari

Cady Voyer

Kelly Rhineland

Kendall Bierer

Kirsten Drew

Tyler VanVelsen

EQ MEDIA